

Green energy officially switched on at landfill

By REGINA BUTLER
Pontotoc Progress

A very special switch was thrown at the Three Rivers Solid Waste Landfill last Wednesday, to mark the successful completion and activation of a landfill gas-to-energy initiative.

A project that has been more than a year in the making, the pilot program was started in Pontotoc because of the landfill.

The Tennessee Valley Authority partnered with the Pontotoc Electric Power Association and Three Rivers Solid Waste Management Authority to produce green electricity.

The authority expended some \$1 million to build a methane gas collection system. And the gas is being flared to keep it from going into the environment.

Huge ribbed pipes run from each of the four cells at the landfill to a central location. These pipes are collecting the methane gas that is a natural by product of waste material as it

decomposes in the landfill.

This runs into one central pipe underground to a metal pipe that is some four stories in the air and the gasses burn from the tall cylindrical piece of metal.

The second part of the phase was the installation of the generator which cost the Authority some \$1.2 million.

With this new system in place, these gases are run through another process.

The gases are heated in one pipe, which enables the moisture to be pulled out of it. They are temporarily cooled down in the second pipe and are condensed at this point, then reheated to a proper temperature before being put into a giant generator.

That generator sends it to a giant green transformer out in front of the building that houses the generator, which converts this into electricity and it is put directly onto the TVA power grid.

The 1.2 megawatt generator was built and shipped to

Pontotoc from Germany.

The ceremony dedicating the green energy generator was attended by officials from TVA, P.E.P.A., Three Rivers as well as U.S. Senator Roger Wicker and U.S. Congressman Alan Nunnelee.

"Projects like this one represent the kind of forward-thinking, cost-effective investment we need as we move toward energy independence in America," said Wicker. "If you have progress you are going to have waste, and need to dispose of it. I hope Pontotoc's participation in TVA's Generation Partner's program will be an inspiration to other communities."

PEPA is the second oldest rural electric cooperative in the U.S. and has been a pioneer in rural electrification since 1935.

"Pontotoc Electric Power Association is proud to be a part of this exciting and successful effort with TVA and Three Rivers to bring green power to

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Rick Faucette, Chairman Three Rivers Solid Waste Authority; Mike Armour, Appalachian Region Commission;; Wayne Stokes, Pontotoc County Board of Supervisors President; Chuck Howell, PEPA General Manager; David Sparks, TVA Mississippi District; Senator Roger Wicker; Congressman Alan Nunnelee; Pontotoc City Mayor Jeff Stafford; Bill Canty with Senator Thad Cochran's office and Tommie Cardin with Butler Snow law firm flip the switches that power the bulb from electricity generated by the gasses from the Three Rivers Landfill. (Photo by Regina Butler)